The Unitarian Christian

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NOTICE

The Editorial Board of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship has voted, after a consideration of many questions involved, that the Unitarian Christian Magazine shall be a sixteen page quarterly instead of a twelve page monthly publication.

This decision is based upon several factors, the most noteworthy that every member of the Editorial Board and staff is an unpaid volunteer whose time, like the time of all social-minded citizens, is at a premium. For example, the editor, aside from his position with the Unitarian Fellowship, serves a Unitarian Church in a full-time capacity, is a member of several committees concerned with denominational work, and an officer in several other organizations. This is the pattern of activity which most of our staff writers follow. Hence the need for a better apportioning of time.

It is also believed that a larger quarterly magazine will make possible the publication of longer articles, the theme of which can be more extensively developed.

It is hoped that subscribers will not only understand the logic of this decision, but will find the new magazine a qualitative improvement over what has heretofore been published. Any further improvement of the magazine in the future, both in size and content, will be made possible only if our loyal subscribers make an effort to recruit other sympathetic subscribers.

Back copies or new subscriptions may be procured through the Editorial Office, price 25 cents per copy; $1.00 per year's subscription.

THE LAYMAN TODAY

by

Norman Russell

Active Lay Member of

The First Religious Society

Newburyport, Mass.

NORMAN RUSSELL

I like Webster's definition of a 'layman' as 'some times one not belonging to any particular profession, or not expert in some branch of knowledge or art, in distinction from those who *do* or *are*.' Dryden perhaps puts us in our place when he writes, "Being a 'layman', I ought not to have concerned myself with speculations which belong to the profession."

Within the context of the Church the layman is one not a minister ordained for the pastoral service. In brief, I am a layman.

The laymen in a church are not merely a group of churchgoers..... they are the church itself. A dying church means spiritually dead laymen. Free churches with the congregational type of government are entirely under the control and administration of the laity. No organization or individual ranks higher than another in authority. Just think therefore how essential laymen are. The church work is largely carried on by laymen, the financial support must come from laymen, and the enthusiasm, too, must be ours lest we find ourselves a group of drones in a bee-hive with a queen bee in the person of our good minister trying to extend himself to make up for our own inadequacies and indifferences.

Laymen are important to democracy. We, in America, are not dominated by a Monarch, a Dictator, or the like. If America ever loses its laymen it might as well bid goodbye to "enterprising freedoms" and bury the wonderful culture which has been ours.

No matter what organization to which you belong, you depend upon voluntary laymen.....not professionals, and you know, as I do from experience in community activities, that there is a mathematical ratio, namely, that the success of an organization equals the sum-total of its members' efforts. It is as simple as that!

This is why I am writing about and for the Layman today. It is most timely not only for the church but for every walk of the democratic life. Many a person succeeds by making the most of other people's opportunities.

There are all types of laymen just as there are all kinds of birds of the air. We generalize when we speak of birds and we generalize in speaking about laymen. Some birds have gay plumage, others

are the drab grey of a starling.

Some laymen are small in stature and character; some are like humming birds while still others resemble eagles.

In general there are several types of such men:

(1) There are those who say, "Why should I do anything about the conditions of the world? Let God do it!" I must add that such a man or woman is not a true Unitarian because one of our beliefs is that God works through us and the thankful man repays God by serving his fellow man.

(2) Then there is the type of man who shows on his face and in his words that he believes all efforts are futile. It is as if he said, "What's the use. I can't do anything to improve the world or the community. I give up." Sometimes such a man has sincerely tried and failed. Hence he has accepted failure.

(3) Thirdly there is the overactive, overly confident and optimistic type who says, "I can do anything...." with the result that he accepts all kinds of responsibilities, so many in fact, that he cannot possibly do any one efficiently. This kind of fellow means well and does radiate a constructive influence, but he certainly has neither the real energy nor time to do everything.

Now, it seems to me, this division of types is unfortunate. Individually each has his failings. No one type is adequate. When you have them all within a single society you find that the organization will fluctuate between success and failure like the tides of the ocean.

We are now in the football season, which reminds us that team work is a solution. If we can get these individual types to play ball, to work in teams then each one's separate failings are made up by the excess of the favorable qaulities in the others.

For example, the man who says "it's no use. I can't do anything" can be inspired, if not led, by the fellow who wants to do everything but can't. The man who says, "Let God do it.....and wait for God's will" can be greatly goaded into doing God's will, if the other two start something. He will soon conclude that they may be instruments of God and if they are he will jump on the wagon.

The team made up of these three types of personalities among laymen can accomplish much. Each one has a unique contribution to make to the over-all picture. The executive needs helpers; the helpers need an executive and so forth. Dream big dreams, then get up and put on your work clothes and make the dreams come true.

Why is the layman so important today?

You know as well as I do. The continued threat of war, the danger that our way of life may be destroyed, the division of our national unity, the weakness of our communities and our churches..... all are sad omens of the great task confronting us.

In these troublesome times we are handing over more and more authority to professionals and it seems that the laymen are not important.....but who, after all, are the professionals, but men entrusted with a job.

In order to safeguard ourselves, to prevent professionalism from sweeping America and piling up the national debt to the point where we citizens are bankrupt, if not discouraged beyond hope..... we must hold high the part which must be played by laymen.

There are many who say, "I can't do anything. I'm only one out of about 160,000,000 people. I'm just a cog in a wheel, a pebble on a beach or a drop of water in the ocean."

Is this really so?

Anyone who has read the New Testament knows that Christianity was founded not by professionals but by a little band of laymen. What was Jesus but a layman? Who were his 12 disciples but laymen? None of these had degrees or ordination. None served as priests in the temples.....yet visualize what they accomplished!

Each single one of these twelve men was worth at least 100,000 others in terms of their separate influence. The astounding number of people in the world today is no basis for figuring our collective worth.....One man can lead millions.....

(1) Wars are led by leaders; one Eisenhower or one MacArthur can lead hundreds of thousands. One great mind in the midst of an ignorant majority can uplift the whole crowd.

(2) Look at the progress in the nation or in the community. Who starts things and carries on the causes.....? Not the crowds.....they are awaiting one man or a small group of men to show the way.

Let us not be misled into defeatism just because we are only one man. If Jesus had felt this way, if each of the twelve disciples had felt this way, where would Christianity and our civilization be? If they had said, "Let God do it....." they would have deserved divine sympathy. If they had said, "It can't be done" nothing would ever have been done.

Let us not fool ourselves into thinking that laymen can not do this or that. I know they can. They can mutually educate and influence each other, they can serve the church, they can take a lead in the cause of a prosperous community and above all, they can prove our Unitarian point, that God works through man, and only through man.

It is not how much we have or how much we do, but how much we enjoy what we do that makes for happiness and success.

It is not enough for us to attend church either occasionally or regularly, as the case may be. We must overcome our weaknesses, our indifferences and our distinctions. We must put aside our prejudices.....great or small.....real or imagined. We must continually and collectively strive for our common good in our church, our community and our nation. No layman, either man or woman is absolved from this grave responsibility..... for 'united we stand, or divided we fall'.

KING'S CHAPEL NOONDAY SERVICES IN BOSTON

October 30-November 2:
REV. BERNARD C. CLAUSEN, D.D.,
Formerly Minister of Euclid Avenue Baptist Church, Cleveland.

November 6-9:
REV. VIVIAN T. POMEROY, D.D.,
First Parish, Milton.

November 13-16:
REV. FREDERICK KELLER STAMM,
D.D., Chicago.

November 20-23:
Tuesday and Wednesday,
DEAN TERTIUS VAN DYKE,
Hartford Theological School.

Thursday, 10:30 A.M. Thanksgiving Day,
DR. PERKINS.

Friday,
REV. HEINZ RETTIG,
The First Religious Society, Newburyport.

November 27-30:
REV. SIDNEY LOVETT, D.D.,
Chaplain, Yale University.

THE GOD WE WORSHIP

By Rev. Victor Fox
Minister of Kilburn Unitarian Church, London, England

Unitarians are still widely regarded as people who deny certain teachings held by the members of other churches, and not as people holding positive beliefs which they regard as nearer the truth and more inspiring and helpful than the beliefs they reject. In this sermon (as I hope always) I shall stress our positive convictions, though I must also mention certain views held by some other Christian churches, views which we cannot accept, and on account of which it would be simply dishonest for us to join such churches. I must speak of the God we do not worship, before trying to portray the God whom we endeavour to worship with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

We do not worship a God who made the world in six days, bringing the sun into existence on the fourth day. We do not worship a God who, because Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, condemned all their descendants to pain and death and to eternal torment in Hell—except a few who, born 4,000 years later, should believe in the atoning death of His Son. We do not worship a God who, because of man's sinfulness, drowned almost the whole of creation, including innocent animals; or the God who sent the most appalling plagues to afflict the Egyptians, because Pharaoh, whose heart He had hardened, would not let His people go. This cruel tribal God of early Jewish legend is too closely made in man's image, and not even in the image of the best of men. He is like the tyrant kings of ancient times, fierce and terrible, irrational, arbitrary, vindictive and vain. On the other hand we do not worship a God who is so utterly different from men that they can form no reliable conception of His nature, a God who is, "Pure Being, with no characteristics knowable to the human mind," or "Beyond Being, in whom there is no distinction between knower and known or between good and evil," or "Pure thought contemplating pure thought." Nor do we think of God as an irresistible blind urge eternally creating without any regard as to what is created.

Certainly "God's thoughts are not our thoughts nor His ways our ways," but if the mind of God is so unlike the mind of man that our conceptions of truth have no resemblance to the real truth, and our ideas of good and evil are quite different from good and evil as God conceives them, then intelligent worship is impossible, and even intelligent discussion about worship becomes very difficult.

The God we worship is a God revealed in man. Man has the gifts of intelligence and purpose and these qualities proclaim the existence and nature of God. All living creatures manifest some measure of intelligence and purpose. Biologists, with few exceptions, agree that the behaviour of living organisms cannot be explained by terms appropriate to a machine. Even those who deny the reality of intelligence and purpose assume their existence and importance every time they discuss their own views. This all-important fact convinces us that, "In the beginning was the Word, the Idea, the Thought, the Purpose, the Mind of God." It is this God whom we worship. There is, however, a further revelation. God is also seen in man's ideals of truth, beauty and goodness. To say this, is not, once more, to make God in man's image. A man's ideals are always better than himself. They are above and beyond himself. Concerning these ideals every thoughtful person must sometimes ask, "Whence do they come?" "Why should we reverence them?" "Why have they such power over us?" "Why must

we obey them even against our own interests?" "Why are we so ashamed when we disregard their demands?" Our answer to all these questions is that our ideals originate in God, in a God we ought to worship.

The ideals of truth, beauty and goodness are facts, all-important facts, facts the significance of which we cannot exaggerate. It is a reasonable faith that they give us a glimpse of the nature of ultimate reality, that they are rays of light from the eternal spirit of God.

Those Unitarians who call themselves Christians—and most do, in fact, claim the right to use this name—do so because they find their own ideals of truth, beauty and goodness, approved, confirmed, exalted, and realised in Jesus Christ. For Unitarians Jesus was not God, but rather the supreme Son of God. They reject the doctrine of Trinity. Jesus "Increased in wisdom"— was tempted— expressed surprise ("He marvelled at their unbelief") —declared, "My Father is greater than I, asked, "Why callest thou me good?" adding "There is none good save one, that is God"—often prayed to God, saying on one occasion, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done"—and on the cross cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me." Clearly he did not regard himself as God.

But we rejoice to see in Jesus Christ the supreme example of truth, beauty and goodness manifested in a human life, and these are the most important aspects of the Godhead known to man. Yet God is also manifested as intelligence, purpose and power, so that we prefer to avoid the word "Trinity."

So far I have spoken only of God as revealed in man, as though He were absent from the rest of creation. Yet man is part of nature. He is a product of evolution. God did not begin to exist when man was born. I believe that God expresses Himself in the glory of the stars, in the majesty of mountains, in the beauty of a sunset and in the loveliness of flowers. As all the light of day is from the sun, so all the beauty of creation is from God. God uses the wonders of the natural world to manifest Himself to us. A Unitarian writer was recently gazing at a most glorious sunset. "The sky was filled with fiery wings and luminous feathers of flame and gold." A crossing sweeper standing by exclaimed, "There's beauty for you"! and added after a few moments' pause, "We can't get away from God, try as we will." That crossing sweeper was "not far from the Kingdom of God."

The God we worship is not just a faint possibility, or a vague shadow, or merely a mental conception. He is the ultimate reality revealed in intelligence and purpose, and in our ideals of truth, beauty and goodness. He can be found in all men and in all places, but is most clearly seen in Jesus Christ, and most often found in those churches where He is worshipped "in spirit and in truth." He is the author of all that is best within us. He has been the friend and companion of all those who, in ancient and modern times, have lived and died in the service of the ideal, He loves all men irrespective of class, colour or creed. "He giveth power to the faint and to him that hath no might He increaseth strength. All who honestly strive to serve the ideals of truth, beauty and goodness are, consciously, or unconsciously, fellow-workers with Him. To worship Him in all sincerity is to be transformed into His image, and to become more worthy to be called "The Sons of God." Then truth, beauty and goodness will shine forth in every word we speak and in every action we perform, to the glory of God's holy name, and the advancement of His Kingdom.

ARE UNITARIANS CHRISTIANS?

By Rev. Walter Donald Kring
Minister of the Second Parish of Worcester, Mass.

We are often asked, Are Unitarians Christians? People who know little about the Unitarian movement oftentimes confuse the words "Unitarian" and "atheist"; Somehow they think of Unitarians as being outside the fold of Christianity. Occasionally we are accused of being non-Christians.

But the confusion is not limited to non-Unitarians. Often we ask ourselves if we really can be thought of as Christians. It is a serious question, and not one entered into lightly. We are not much interested in the sacraments, except marriage. We deny that Jesus was the actual Son of God except as we all are Sons of God; we deny the Virgin Birth, the Immaculate Conception, the physical resurrection. Many of the things that we do are similar to the practises and customs of other churches. But there are differences that make us question sometimes whether we are actually a part of the tradition whose beliefs and practises we do not share completely and with which we are not sympathetic.

This fundamental question resolves itself into several considerations, for the word Christian has many meanings. The first question is this: Do we belong to the Christian tradition? Are we in the stream of history and culture that has come to be called Christian? The answer as to whether or not we fit into that stream is not simple because I cannot see, in spite of many claims to the contrary, that Christianity is a simple, unanimous tradition that has come down unchanged and undiversified from the time of Jesus. Christianity is, instead, the merging and eliminating of many modes and types of thought, some of which have become predominant today, some of which have been passed over. In many respects modern Christianity can be said to be the result of votes in church councils.

We say, for example, that the ancient Greeks condemned Socrates to death, but it is not so simple as all that. There were actually 501 men on the jury that condemned Socrates; of this number slightly more than half, 281, were for his death, the other 220 were for his acquital. If 31 out of 501 men had voted the other way, that is, if six per cent of the men had changed their votes, Socrates would not have been condemned to death. Is it not then an over-simplification to say that the Greeks condemned Socrates to death?

The same sort of thing has been true with regard to the Christian tradition. The ancient church councils made decisions which represented the majority of the people present. When Jesus was declared to be the actual Son of God born of a virgin, it was not a unanimous decision, but a majority decision. It is interesting to note that those who were not with the majority were declared anathema; they were thrown out of the church and were accused of teaching heresy. Can one say that a completely objective and inspired decision had been reached? The whole body of doctrine that we know as Christian doctrine is based upon such a majority and intolerant point of view.

I believe in democracy just as you do. If a majority of the voters declare that we shall have Whigs to rule, we will have them rule. We shall remain the loyal opposition if we oppose. But shall we thereupon put out of bounds all of those who are not Whigs? It sounds too much like Communism or Facism to suit me.

However, in the church, because the church felt that it was dealing with truth and falsehood, it has been the practice to do this. It was felt that the decisions were

ıe infallible truth and that everyone else ıould be damned. This is a naive faith ı the majority that most of us could not ıare.

So if someone asks me if we are in ıe Christian tradition, I must immediate- ask this question: Which Christian tra- ition? For there is not a single tradition. hose of us who call ourselves Unitarians ave kinship with some very important ıinorities of the past, with many who ecause of the sincerity of their belief ere thrown out of the church. Therefore, feel that we are in the Christian tradi- on just as much as any other church ven though we may represent a minor- y tradition.

The second question follows immed- ately: Can one be a Christian without elonging to the church which claims to e the Church of Christ? Largely the hurch has assumed that only those who ave been baptized with specified rituals nd who have accepted certain doctrines ıay be called Christians. Such a church enies the right of man to think for him- lf on religious matters. It says that the hurch is the only repository of truth ırough all the ages, and that there is no ther true doctrine possible but the doc- ine it professes. Remembering the way ı which these doctrines were arrived at ı the church councils, let me point out ırther that there is no single interpre- tion of Christianity possible. There is ot even a single interpretation of the achings of Christ possible. Jesus' teach- gs are full of many paradoxes and areas f interpretation.

When Monsignor Shean recently di- ided the world into the "Red" and the Black" and tells us that liberalism is dead nd that we must chose between Russia nd Catholicism, he is guilty of not only ver-simplifying the truth but also of rcing humanity into a totalitarian cor- er. He condemns liberalism as being like nineteenth century liberalism which he says is dead. We who call ourselves liberals would condemn the same sort of naive thinking. In 1913 we believed that the world had reached a solution to most of our problems. But we don't believe that any more. We have been too much impressed with tragedy. That sort of liberalism was a lie. We agree that no possible rearrangement of bad eggs can make a good omelet. But neither can we make a good omelet out of what Monsignor Shean is proposing, for he simply is presenting a choice between two totalitarian systems. He says in effect that we must give up our right to think for ourselves and trust our future either to an authoritarian communistic state or to an authoritarian church. I cannot see that authoritarianism is any better in one field than in another. So we must throw out the conception of some people that we have to belong to a particular church to be called a Christian.

Our third question is similar to the second: Is Christianity a closed corporation or a closed shop? As Joseph Fort Newton has said, "Some of our friends will not worship with us; they will not be buried with us. To put it plainly, any church, old or new, large or small, which assumes or claims that it has a monopoly of God and the sacraments of His grace, is guilty of something akin to blasphemy." Also, George Bernard Shaw once said, "The Church is in the hands of God not God in the hands of the Church."

It is interesting to point out that Jesus directed his strongest censure, not against the avowed pagans and infidels of his day, but against those who claimed to be believers. He made it plain that to say, "Lord, Lord," has no value at all, if those who use the words do not take seriously what he said. So today no one has the right to claim that he or any institution he represents has an exclusive

prerogative to truth.

Therefore, although we should love and be friendly to those who hold such views (for unless we did this we should not be Christians), we cannot but oppose such ideas with all our being. For the option which Monsignor Shean gives us of the "Red" and the "Black" is simply a false option between two totalitarianisms, one in one sphere, the other in another. It is very similar to the option which Hitler always pointed out to the German people of accepting Bolshevism or the Nazi philosophy. He claimed that it was an inevitable decision; there were no other options. But fortunately in relatively free America we still have other options, and one of them is the right of men to make up their own minds in matters of religion as well as in the economic, political, and social spheres.

But what I have said thus far in answering these three questions has been largely against those who claim that they are the only Christians. This is part of the answer, for this is one reason that Unitarians often are considered not to be Christians. But the fourth question comes more nearly to answering the fundamental question, Are Unitarians Christians? The question is simply this: Are we Christians in the sense of being followers of Jesus? Is this not really the most profound aspect of being a Christian, that we attempt to follow the two fundamental teachings of Jesus—the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man?

I know that Unitarians often have been accused of forgetting about God and talking about the fatherhood of man and the brotherhood of God. Perhaps we have emphasized too much the doctrine of the brotherhood of man at the expense of the Fatherhood of God. But at least we are not theological obscurantists. We are trying with an open mind to apply the same sort of thinking to the religious realm that we apply to science and to business. Religion cannot be compartmentalized so that we accept things in the religious sphere that we would not accept in other spheres. We claim the right to test any new truth, to see if it is true for us, and that right applies to religious truths as well as scientific truths.

The fundamental concern of Jesus, enunciated in the Great Commandment, was the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Frankly I care not whether a man is in the proper and accepted tradition which ecclesiasticism has imposed upon mankind so long as he is a firm believer in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. We do not need to interpret the Fatherhood of God in any supernatural sense. We simply need to sense a Unity behind all creation: a Unity which is akin to what we call personality. We may not even call this spirit God. Men call God by many different names, but essentially they mean the same thing. They simply need to have faith in this Unity that they sense in the world.

They need to feel also that because we are all Sons of God we are brothers one to another. I am sure that if Jesus of Nazareth were to return to earth today he would be confused by all those who believe certain doctrines and claim to be his only followers. Many of these doctrines would be completely unfamiliar to Jesus. He might even purge the temple. But I am sure that he would be interested in the religion of those who are trying to follow his fundamental teachings. These men certainly would be his disciples. They might believe more than the minimum that I have suggested, but these two ideas would be fundamental.

Are Unitarians Christians? We are Christians in so far as each one of us individually is trying to follow Christ's teachings, in so far as we are trying with all of our being to know the truth, and to

ollow the Law of Love in treating others
s brothers. This is being Christian in a
ense very real, important, and fundamen-
al.

THE MINNS LECTURES

1951

Six Wednesday Afternoon Addresses

by

REV. CHARLES E. PARK, D.D.

Minister Emeritus, First Church in Boston

THE WAY OF JESUS

Oct. 10 Biographical Sketch
Oct. 17 His Thought of God
Oct. 24 His Attitude to Man
Oct. 31 His Moral Incentive
Nov. 7 His Sense of Purpose
Nov. 14 Summary and Application

at 4 P.M. in the

EDWARD EVERETT HALE CHAPEL

64 Marlborough Street

All are cordially invited

Tea is served after each lecture

FAITH'S ANSWER

by

Rev. Carl Bihldorff

Minister of the First Parish, Brookline

Is there anyone who has not at times rebelled against life's uncertainties? All of us long for security and comfort but often we get trouble and pain. We yearn for a voice to reveal to us life's destiny but we are engulfed by an awful silence. We hope for the welfare of loved ones yet our hopes often end in despair. Life offers no guarantees; rather it tests all that a man has of courage, fidelity, and faith.

Most of us think of Lincoln as a man of granite character, a triumphant soul who successfully faced life's fiery blasts. And the truth is he did exceptionally well for one whom life buffeted so hard. But listen to these words written by David R. Locke after studying Lincoln's face at a Quincy, Illinois hotel: "I never saw a more thoughtful face. I never saw a more dignified face. I never saw so sad a face". Yes, that is what life can do to the ablest sons of men. The soul cries out for light and understanding, but the request is never wholly satisfied, and the weight of life's perplexities and uncertainties, and sorrows leaves its mark upon all flesh.

In the Bible we read: "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?" Well, life speaks to us in uncertain notes, and because of the confusion of its tongue many go through life as a tale that is told, never preparing themselves for battle for they have had no guarantee that the struggle is worth the price.

There is no satisfactory answer to those who raise this question. At least there is no intellectual approach which ends in a Q. E. D. for righteousness or

justice or the good life. The only effective answer is life itself and stories of those who have illustrated the value of making a right adjustment to it.

Lincoln was perplexed by life. Many whys and wherefores were never answered for him and the sadness of his face spoke poignantly of humanity's strange predicament. But though Lincoln's penetrating mind could not probe through some of life's baffling mysteries he did not stay on the sidelines—a neutral. Once when he was discussing the issue of slavery with some political men, he rose from his seat and paced the room to and fro. One man present reported that he saw tears fill Lincoln's eyes, and then Lincoln stopped and said: "I know there is a God, and that he hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me I believe I am ready. I am nothing, but truth is everything".

A philosophizing mind can sit on life's sidelines and honestly say "Nothing is certain. I can't even prove that I exist" and from the purely intellectual approach he cannot effectively be contradicted. From the viewpoint of pure reason anything can be justified, anything condoned, and a man can if he wishes live his life in moral neutrality. But there is something "other" within us, something that respects integrity, courage and ethical determination. Perhaps it is this alone which marks our divinity; whatever its source, it is a fact. One prisoner, serving a long sentence in jail, said: "Even if a man does escape the police there is something inside him.....it's no use trying to beat. Death is mild compared to the thing a criminal finds himself up against. I give up. I can't explain it."

In Divinity School Dean Weigle told our class that when he was a member of a Western Sunday School his teacher read those lines from Daniel which were read in the morning lesson, and then he asked the boys what they thought was so courageous about those mythical heroes—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Dean Weigle admitted that he and his classmates agreed that the unwavering faith of those men in God's ability to save them from the burning, fiery furnace was their outstanding spiritual achievement. But the teacher shook his head. He said: "You have missed the real message of this story by one verse. Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego were not heroes because of their faith in God's ability to save them from death. They proved themselves heroes because they bravely declared: 'Even though our God may not deliver us, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.' " No guarantee of safety did they have but for all of that they chose to stand by their ideals.

Moral decisions are sometimes costly, but what would we think of the human race were such grandeur not a part of its history. Socrates deliberately choosing to drink the hemlock rather than escape and live in exile; John Huss refusing to recant even though it meant death at the stake; Albert Schweitzer, declining the comfort and security his great talent could provide, and going into darkest Africa to minister to the needs of the black men. The record of our race is filled with stories of men and women who spurned the security of intellectual neutrality heeding instead some inner voice and then living and dying for the fragment of truth they had grasped.

Whatever our estate in the realm of moral character we do know this: that the only real security worth winning in this life is the peace of mind and soul which comes to those who have been loyal to the highest they knew. Guarantees of health, physical safety, material secur-

ty? No! But in their place, something much finer. Not easily won. Heavens no! Jesus never suggested it was an easy road. He kept underscoring the cost. To minister, and not be ministered unto; to take up our cross and follow; to lay up treasures, not earthly but heavenly things; to care naught for this life, but for God's kingdom. That's part of the price of real security. No written guarantees, but an inward assurance and a feeling of at-oneness with God. Arthur Gossip has pictured God as saying to Jesus as he faced the final crisis of his life: Are you ready to go now? And Jesus said he was. Then he saw the crowds melt away and his disciples run for cover. And God said, Will you still go on? And Jesus said he would. Then came the trial where justice had no voice, and later the awful journey to Calvary. And God said, Are you willing to pay the whole, full price? And he said, Yes. So they nailed him fast, and left him there to die— the safest soul there ever was! as Gossip says. And somehow we also know that its price is Christlikeness.

But what specifically are the terms of this guarantee? How can we purchase a share in its stock? The answer would take longer than our time allows, and yet we can point out a few avenues.

In the first place, we must face the prospect that life—brief as it sometimes seems—is really an adventure in eternity. Practically every religious faith has affirmed this truth: life is eternal. Though the outward eye sees life in terms of time, the religious eye knows that it transcends time. Deep down in our hearts we feel that we have a stake in some future beyond that which will be ours on earth.

To be sure, voices within and without attempt to refute this insight. Our selfish instincts, our inertia, our doubts, our seeming satisfaction with material things: all these say nay—don't you believe it. But God has also implanted in our being a challenging affirmation which few of us ever wholly own. Robert Ingersoll was a severe critic of Christian theology, and he ridiculed the thought of immortality, but when he stood at the grave of his own brother, these words came from his lips: "In the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing. Character survives; goodness lives; love is immortal". Yes, sometimes we have to wait for sorrow to open the gate of hope, but in few lives does it remain permanently closed.

Now if this is the last word about life, what shall we do about it? Well, in the first place, we can begin with the task of extending our perspective. Eternity is a gift, but to prepare for eternity is an art. An art, which requires all our nurture, encouragement and determination. When Socrates was about to drink the hemlock, he spoke words which were worthy of any reverent philosopher: "I pray the gods may prosper my journey from this to that other world—may this then which is my prayer, be granted to me". But unlike so many men, Socrates was not asking for something he had not all his life striven to be worthy of. The issue of a future life is not in man's hands, but to be worthy of eternal life is.

You might expect me now to speak of loyalty to righteousness and truth and love as the way to life eternal. These are the rungs which ancient prophets have long said lead to God and his kingdom. And they are. I'm not discounting them. But something else is needed. Our forefathers had it, but most of us lost it. Have you seen pictures in Life of little Chinese children lying down to die in the gutters. Had you heard that outside one Chinese city a line miles long was formed—a line of people who knew they were doomed to die of starvation—but they waited in line because they were told that the city was providing coffins free of

charge, and they all wanted a decent burial. There are enough tragic incidents the whole world round to stir in us such a flood-tide of pity, compassion and urgency to save that we could hardly contain ourselves. But is any such reaction in evidence? Why not? I think I know. Most of us have lost our vision of life's holiness. Nothing much is especially sacred. Two world wars begun for material gain have cast their shadow upon us. Fifty million human beings sacrificed to Mars has made life seem cheap. And the sophistication of a materialistic age has turned millions into scoffers. What's the way out? More sermons on righteousness and truth and love and brotherhood? You know it isn't. Man has to discover again whose child he is and to whom he and this universe belongs. Each of us must open the window of his soul as Jesus did and catch sight of our God and His righteousness. We must be electrified, not by the wonders of a scientific age, but by the wonder and beauty of our own souls as they respond to the power and the glory of God and submit themselves to His will.

Paul Scherer writes: "There's a terrific moment in the Bible.....It comes in the life of Job. One trouble after another, blow upon blow has fallen on his bare head: until there seem to be no pillars under the sky. The sun was setting in a drunken world: cattle, barns, children, health—all gone. And there he sat, his face ashen, mumbling words falling from between clenched teeth. "The Lord gave," he muttered over and over again: "and the Lord hath taken away." Someone, I forget now who, has suggested that there was a dead silence, while everything teetered in the balance: Job's soul, his religion, all he knew about God and life; and even the unseen world was listening, the very angels, for what would come next. Would it be a cry of final anguish, followed by a curse? Breathlessly they leaned over the battlements of heaven and waited. Then it came, half a sob and half a shout: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

When each of us can learn thus to pray, when each of us learns to trust God as Job did, when each of us whether out of anguish or joy remembers that God was before this world and will be forevermore, we shall ask for neither guarantees nor security; and when enough souls have truly learned what it means to sincerely say: "Blessed be the name of the Lord", His kingdom of peace and of love will enfold all nations and all peoples.

Prayer

Eternal God, we pray for Thy blessing upon our children, and upon our Church School in which we seek to teach them of Thee. Make us worthy of the enormous privilege of having them — deepen our love of them — increase our wisdom and understanding — expand our patience — keep alive within us at all times our sense of Thee — that so we may give them of our best, and help lead them into the full meaning of their lives in the service of Thy Kingdom of advancing love, and truth, and beauty, — always in that spirit of love which we have seen in Jesus.

Amen

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Ever wish you could turn the clock back and catch an important event you missed? You can do that in this month's pages of the *Register*. All the important speeches given at the World Order Conference at Star Island this summer are in this issue—either word for word or in precise form. You can even catch a glimpse of the exciting panel discussions and question periods. Does Russia want war? Maurice Hindus, Russian born and Russia traveled, has an answer. Karl Deutsch, also concerned with the problem of war, focuses on the necessity of keeping in touch—even with our enemies. John Kielty, English socialist, explains the Labor Government's foreign policy, especially its recognition of Red China. Lester Lewis' copious recordings and notes bring you the rest of the Conference and John Baker sums up its "idea" content. For events on the domestic scene of extreme concern to liberals, this month also brings you eye-witness Homer Jack's report on the Cicero, Ill. race riot, and Lillian Barbour's coverage of California "church-state" trouble in respect to tax-payers' money for parochial schools.

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